



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

America, spent some years in England, residing with an unmarried sister, soliciting office from the government, and endeavoring to bring under its notice an invention which he hoped was of great value. After weary years, both schemes were abandoned. He withdrew to the island of Guernsey, and in 1831, in the sixty-third year of his age, in poverty, but solaced by the affectionate care of his one constant friend, he sank to his rest.

Mrs. Blennerhasset was now left alone in her old age, to support and educate three children. After eleven years of toil, she returned to the United States in the hope of obtaining from the government reparation for the injury done to her property, in the winter of 1806, in the name of the government, by officers acting under its authority. Henry Clay presented her petition in the federal Senate. The committee appointed to examine it reported that the claim was legal and proper, and that not to allow it would be unworthy a wise or just nation. It would, doubtless, have been granted; but while Congress were discussing it, she died in an humble abode in New York, soothed in her last hours by the charitable attentions of a society of Irish females.

-
- ART. VIII. — 1. *On the Present State and Recent Progress of Ethnographical Philology.* Part I. Africa. By R. G. LATHAM, M. D. pp. 66.
2. *On the Various Methods of Research which contribute to the Advancement of Ethnology, and of the Relations of that Science to Other Branches of Knowledge.* By JAMES C. PRICHARD, M. D., F. R. S. &c. pp. 24.
3. *On the Results of the Recent Egyptian Researches in Reference to Asiatic and African Ethnology, and the Classification of Languages: A Discourse read before the Ethnological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Oxford, on the 28th of June, 1847, by C. C. J. BUNSEN, D. C. L., Ph. D.* pp. 46.
4. *On the Importance of the Study of the Celtic Language*

as exhibited by the Modern Celtic Dialects still extant.

By DR. CHARLES MEYER. pp. 18.

5. *On the Relation of the Bengali to the Arian and Aboriginal Languages of India.* By DR. MAX MÜLLER. pp. 32.

THE treatises whose titles are here given are all contained in the "Reports of the British Association" for the year 1847; and, together with a few shorter contributions on kindred subjects, occupy just two hundred pages, or about a third part of the whole volume.

It is our present design to recall the attention of our readers to the scientific character and value of linguistic researches, and especially to their bearing upon the vexed question of the unity of the human race. And as the very connection in which these treatises have been published indicates the position which the British, as well as the German, scientific world have been disposed to accord to philological inquiries, we have chosen to place them at the head of our article rather than any more recent productions.

We are aware that it has become fashionable to treat such studies as dry and trite, and even to reject them as puerile. To scoff at etymology is no new thing; and efforts are sometimes made to decry all philological investigations as, in a scientific point of view, entirely unproductive and inconclusive. We are constrained, therefore, to beg pardon for our present intrusion; but, with Minerva, Mercury, Apollo, and the Muses on our side, we hope we shall not be denied a hearing by the votaries of Ceres, Neptune, and Vulcan.

So far as those opinions relate to the *inutility* of the study of language, they are neither to be received nor rejected without a fair, open, and full consideration. But as to the want of *interest* attaching to such studies, its basis is unquestionably quite as much subjective as objective.

To most men, the details of routine and appliances in the painter's or the sculptor's art would seem exceedingly dry and wearisome. But a Venus of Praxiteles, a Madonna of Raphael, or the Greek Slave of Powers was not a mere improvisation, an extempore product of inspired genius, without tools or practice, or rules of art. Patient study of details, a perfect mastery of innumerable technical minutiae, as well as

diligent observation and long reflection, were essential antecedent conditions of such a glorious creation. To the true artist, the study of those minutiae and details, instead of being rejected as irksome or despised as trifling, becomes ennobled by its connection with the ultimate result. Here, the end sanctifies the means.

Not in marble or on canvas only ; in language, too, human genius has manifested its power ; and nowhere is its impress more characteristic, more effective, more enduring. Poetry and eloquence, history and philosophy, are among the forms of such a manifestation. Language itself, in its very structure and development, is the noblest and most characteristic, the most direct and perfect, manifestation of the human mind. Hence the study of language has a humanizing tendency ; — it is the study of man, not indeed in his material and animal relations, but in his proper and peculiar character as an intellectual and logical, or rational, being.

In these later times, the study of the Natural Sciences has drawn to itself more and more of the intellectual activity of thinking and studious men throughout the sphere of Christian civilization, until at length it threatens to swallow up the mind of Christendom — at least of Protestant Christendom — altogether. It has already arrayed on its side the large majority, probably, of the greatest minds of the age ; and this gives it now the *prestige* which formerly belonged to the department of Letters, Philosophy, and Theology. Men are gradually coming to think, or rather have already come to think, that no study can be so noble or so useful as that of external nature.

We would not detract one tittle from the dignity or value of physical science. It has played a noble part in the elevation of the human mind, and we trust, is destined to play a yet nobler. But we cannot see, after much reflection bestowed upon the subject, why the study of a word of human speech, in its origin, history, connections, relations, and significance, is not, in itself and in its results, as worthy and as useful an employment as the examination of a shell, a pebble, a bug, or a worm.

The *worthiness* may be, as we have said, chiefly a matter of taste ; but as *useful*, we say. A man may be an excellent baker, a skilful smith or miner, without being a scientific chemist. He may know how to train an ox or a horse,

or to distinguish a sheep from a goat, or to defend his fruits or crops from the cut-worm, the weevil, or the curculio, without a very thorough acquaintance with Zoölogy. And when, in the single department of Entomology, there are already found more species than man can number, what can be the great use, either practically or even philosophically, of adding one new bug to the number? If one had collected specimens of all the bugs in the world, and invented or stored in his memory a learned Greek name for each; or even had every individual bug been brought to him as soon as it was born, and all duly classified, and arranged in glittering files; it is difficult to see how much the wiser he would be for such a treasure, a thorough and minute acquaintance with which he could not gain were he to live to the good old age of Methuselah, nor convey the details to the world in as many volumes as are contained in the National Library of Paris. Nor is it easy to see to what purpose all this knowledge could be turned, even if it were once acquired and recorded. Certain selections and general views might be scientifically of use, but the measureless mass of particulars must surely frighten any but a most devout amateur of bugs.

It may be suggested, —leaving for the moment the argument of utility, and returning to that of inherent dignity, —that the leaf, the pebble, or the insect, is a work of God; the word a work of man. But is the former any more truly a work of God than the latter? The former is a work of God through the formative processes of natural law or of animal life; the latter is a work of God through the higher laws which regulate the development of intellectual and moral life. If the word were a mere arbitrary product of human ingenuity, there might be more pertinency in the suggestion; but while it is no such arbitrary product, but is either the original and immediate creature and gift of God, or the normal, natural, and necessary offspring and result of the mental constitution and physical organization of man, the force of such a suggestion is utterly annihilated. As well might the human infant be arranged, as a work of man, side by side with the automaton, and thus unceremoniously placed below the bug or the calf.

That the history of a word in the development of its forms and its significance is connected with mental rather

than with merely physical processes, — the same being processes, still, not of ingenious contrivance or of arbitrary volition or convention, but in the highest sense natural and subject to profound and harmonious laws, — is surely no detracting from its character or diminution of its dignity as a work of God. And that character and dignity are rather enhanced than impaired by the fact that such a development is not a *mere* instinctive development, but is connected with and modified by the profoundest movements of a conscious mind, made itself after the image of God, and whose laws of evolution and action are of higher interest and dignity and importance, as a subject of human study, than those pertaining to any other, even the grandest, works of the Creator's power, so far as those works are subject to our cognizance. Indeed, human language may be considered not so much the offspring, or the organ of communication, as the embodiment, the proper manifestation, of the human soul. It reveals to us all we know of other human souls, and probably all, or nearly all, that each of us knows of his own. Certain it is that, so far as experience can serve to determine the fact, we could not suppose human consciousness to be developed to any great extent in its intellectual or moral character, whether in the race or in the individual, without the development and the use of language. Language itself is a far greater work than any of the great works which it contains. The man who would argue down logic, and talk language into disrepute as meaningless, or at least conveying no definite and certain sense, may be left to contend with his own shadow. He will most effectually demolish his own forces.

Physical science has penetrated the heavens, we may say literally, to inconceivable depths, and determined with amazing precision the motions and the mechanism of the systems of bodies which roll in order through the vast expanse; and, what is more amazing still, she has found those motions and that mechanism to be in exact accordance in many cases with the prophetic anticipations of human reason, and always with the mathematical laws and principles which form a portion of its essential constitution. She has penetrated the crust of the earth with her divining rod, and, disinterring generation after generation of organisms that, one after another, have possessed the lordship of this terrestrial sphere, and, one after another,

not merely as individuals, but as entire species, have been consigned to death and sepulchred in the solid rock, she has opened to us a vista of ages in the history of the creation as vast as the vista of distances revealed by astronomy in the immensity of space. She has analyzed all the forms of matter organized and unorganized, and reduced them, provisionally at least, to their simple elements. She has traced out and systematized the laws of the imponderable agencies on which depend the motions and the changes of the visible universe. She has studied the organization of crystal and shell, of plant, tree, and flower, of fish and reptile, beast and bird. And from this lofty position, to what point shall she next essay to climb? What shall be the climax of her ascent,—the apex of her magnificent system? She is already beginning to answer these questions. She is at length becoming more and more conscious that man is her highest study. The physiology of the human frame,—the natural history of the human race in space and time,—occupies more and more intently the minds of scientific men, as the highest problem of scientific research, whose solution is to constitute the crowning triumph of scientific success in the merely physical department. But to the completion of their history, the study of human language must furnish a most important and indispensable aid. The part which philological investigations have begun to occupy among the objects of scientific expeditions, as well as in the doings of scientific associations, is a most significant fact.

The question of the specific unity of mankind is daily assuming more and more prominence in the researches and discussions of scientific men and scientific bodies. This unity may be regarded as physiological, psychological, or genealogical.

And first, in regard to the physiological unity. Considering merely the structure, configuration, and aspect of the human body, does man constitute one species, according to the principles of classification assumed in Natural History? This is the physiological question,—a question for the most part of scientific convenience and consistency, rather than of objective reality.

Here it may be observed in the first place, that the affirmative answer to this question must in itself be more grateful to

the philosophical mind than the negative. The mind instinctively grasps at unity ; in science as well as in theology, it is burdened and pained by a heterogeneous multiplicity and variety. The goal of the scientific spirit, in its minutest analysis and widest inductions, is unity. It knows no higher gratification than to reduce diverse and discordant phenomena under one general law or harmonious principle. It takes no pleasure either in splintering to pieces, or in jostling together. It rejoices in analysis ; but only because that analysis is to be followed by a higher synthesis, in more rigid classifications and more comprehensive unities. If, therefore, the idea of the unity of mankind must be abandoned, none can abandon it with greater reluctance than the man of a truly philosophical spirit.

In the second place ; if there be more than one species of men, then, how many ? And here, if we seek for any thing more than vague generalities adapted to popular convenience, if we demand any thing like a scientific arrangement and rigid classification, the answer must be exceedingly difficult, not to say impossible. One can hardly see how, in consistency with the principles on which the former question was answered in the negative, we can hope to reach any thing definite unless we go boldly on to an almost perfect individualization, or at least to the establishing of specific differences on physiological grounds, even where authentic history demonstrates a genealogical unity.

In the third place ; after all attempts at distinguishing and defining species among men, the antecedent idea and assumption of some sort of unity remains invincibly behind, — a unity which, though it be called merely generic, is of far greater moment than the specific varieties thus established, — a unity inalienably fixed in the human consciousness, and by it universally affirmed, — a unity attested by such words as human, mankind, philanthropy, — a unity, we say, so palpably manifest, so much more palpably manifest than any marks of diversity, that all men in all times have unhesitatingly recognized it ; and even science herself, though she may deny it, must needs begin with its assumption, and acknowledge herself to be engaged in dividing a unity into parts, instead of performing her higher and proper office of grouping and connecting parts into a whole.

Yet it is not to be disguised that there exists in the minds of distinguished scientific men a growing tendency to doubt or deny that mankind constitute physiologically but one species. Some have undertaken to answer the other question, that of plurality, and, applying to its solution the same criteria and principles on which their denial of the unity was founded, they have assigned, some two, some three, some eleven, and some, yet more consistently, fifteen or more, as the number of species into which humanity is to be distributed. But it is surely odd enough that Virey, who is content with a bipartite division, should assign as specific characters, among others, that the first division "has the use of written laws and a condition of civilization more or less advanced;" while the second has "the natural habit of nudity, a limited understanding, and a civilization always imperfect." From which it will seem to follow, among other things, that we, of the so much lauded Anglo-Saxon race, belong—at least so far as these characteristics are grounds of distinction—to a different species from that to which our forefathers belonged when they lived in a habit of comparative nudity, and in a state of extremely imperfect civilization, and were destitute not only of written laws, but even of written language. In like manner, the republicans of Liberia have, at least for a time, made a physiological leap from the lower to the higher species. And such transitions in one or the other direction seem to have taken place, and seem likely to take place, very frequently in the course of human history.

That such theories of the diversity of human species may be entertained by men not only of high scientific attainments, but of pure and honest minds, of high religious character and Christian faith, we are not disposed for a moment to question, or even to doubt. And we believe that great harm is done to religion, to morality, and to intellectual integrity, as well as to science, when those who have scarcely waited to comprehend the terms in which such theories are expressed, and who know nothing at all of the grounds on which they are based, instantly seize upon them, and, skilllessly and witlessly comparing them with the received interpretation of the Bible, forthwith declare them, together with all who hold them, tainted with sheer infidelity. But on the other hand, we

deem it no derogation from the broadest charity to declare that we find unmistakable marks of the spirit, if not the fact, of real infidelity, when we see in certain quarters a disposition to ridicule and sneer at those physiologists who have endeavored to show the consistency of their scientific theories with the doctrines of Revelation; as though such an effort could never be made from an honest and pious purpose, for one's own satisfaction as well as that of others, but must of necessity be an unmanly "sacrifice to vulgar prejudice." If such scoffers do not show their contempt for the Christian religion, they show either their hostility to science or their utter destitution of that large comprehensiveness which recognizes a common bond among all the various departments of human knowledge and human thought, and seeks to harmonize them in one consentaneous system. A mere physiologist, who should have neither sympathy nor acquaintance with any other department of human knowledge, feeling, or effort, who should hold philosophy and polite learning, theology and religion, in thoughtless contempt, would be no more a complete man, — a properly developed, humanized, civilized being, — than a mere philologist, theologian, or pin-maker. No particular department of knowledge is fully mastered and comprehended in a manly sense, until it is viewed not only in itself, but in all its bearings and relations — until it is harmonized with all other departments, and reduced to its appropriate place and order in the grand system of universal truth.

By the psychological unity of the human race is meant, that all nations and tribes of men possess essentially the same intellectual and moral constitution, differing only in degree and in its stage of development at different times, in different countries, under different circumstances, and among different tribes, families, and individuals; — an intellectual and moral constitution by which, as by an infinite distance or impassable gulf, man is separated from all the other inhabitants of the earth. There is no probable evidence that any species of the lower animals, or even any one individual among them, — however remarkable its instincts or great the indications of its intelligence, — can apprehend, or be taught to apprehend, an abstract mathematical ratio, or the distinction between right and wrong as a universal ethical law, or the intelligent

use of language as based upon and expressing logical generalizations. But there has been found no tribe of men so degraded in organization or habit that they could not be taught to apprehend all these ; or indeed that such an apprehension has not been found already in some degree developed among them. Now, in the possession of this *rational, ethical, and logical* nature, all men are one,— they must always recognize each other as brethren ; even though, for the sake of some professedly scientific distinction, the physiologist should divide them into an indefinite number of species.

Among the specific differences which Virey has laid down, certain intellectual and moral characteristics are enumerated, some of which have already been alluded to ; but it is observable that they are all mere differences of *degree*, which may change, and do change, with changing times and circumstances. Some of these peculiarities of different nations and tribes may, indeed, have remained permanent for many generations, or even through the whole historical period ; yet to make such peculiarities, even when thus permanent, the test for specific distinctions, would multiply the number of species beyond the bounds of the wildest scientific credulity. According to such a view, not only would there be a specific difference between the negro and the white and red man ; not only between the red or copper-colored American and the white or brown Caucasian ; not only between the Chinese and the European ; but between Chinese and Tartar, and Burmese and Malay, and Hindoo and Affghan, and Kurd and Arab and Jew ; between the Greek and the Roman, the Gaul and the German, the Saxon and the Norman ; nay, even between the Englishman and the Yankee. The differences are so various in their nature and so infinitesimally graduated in their quantity, that, however permanent they may be or seem to be, they can scarcely furnish a practicable basis for a scientific classification.

Thus, while mankind, in all its varieties, is distinguished from all other races of animals by differences incomparably greater, more definite, and more important than those which separate the very highest class or species of those animals from the very lowest, the different varieties of mankind are so slightly marked, and so shaded into one another, that their unity is incomparably more prominent than their diversity.

While, therefore, we should most reasonably repudiate that Lamarckian theory of universal development, whereby all permanent distinctions between species, genera, classes, orders, and even kingdoms, of nature are broken down and abolished, mind is evolved out of matter, and matter out of an eternal flux or original nothingness, we need not fly to the other extreme, as some in their panic seem disposed to do, and refuse to allow any range, however reasonable, to the application of the law of natural development, as a sufficient explanation of diversities of organization and characteristics. *Est modus in rebus.* The one extreme is perhaps as unphilosophical as the other.

The question of the genealogical unity of mankind is, after all, the ultimate and absorbing question; that which underlies both the others, and which is tacitly referred to in them both; but which yet, as a matter of historical fact, can never be positively settled. A physiological or psychological unity might indeed be maintained, even though a genealogical unity did not exist; but either of the former can scarcely be denied without denying the latter. Meantime, the *probability* of the latter rests on independent evidence — evidence over and above that derived from physiology and psychology. This evidence is twofold, — that derived from the Holy Scriptures, into which it is not our purpose at present to enter, and that derived from a systematic and thorough inductive comparison of all the languages spoken by the various branches and tribes of the human race.

The languages of Europe and Asia have been shown, by men who have studied them most patiently and philosophically, to be reducible to three great families; the Indo-Chinen, or monosyllabic, the Semitic, and the Japhetic, — the last including two branches, the Iranian or Indo-European, and the Turanian, or Ugro-Tartarian. The two branches of the Japhetic are connected with each other, and the Semitic with both, by many common elements and direct grammatical analogies; and the two branches are, moreover, connected by the intermediation of the Celtic and the Basque, and the two families by that of the old Egyptian or Coptic; while the Indo-Chinen gradually passes into the Japhetic through the medium of the Burmese and Thibetian dialects. These constitute all of the most important and best known languages in

the world, spoken by nearly nine tenths of the human race. As for the remaining languages, those who have most thoroughly and extensively studied the African declare, that they all constitute one family, consisting, it is true, of numerous members, but all allied by close affinities among themselves, and all connected, through the Egyptian or Coptic, the Berber and the Abyssinian, both with the Semitic and Japhetic stocks. This is the testimony of Professor Latham in his elaborate Report. The aboriginal American languages, on the authority of our own Duponceau and of William von Humboldt, are likewise, by common consent, grouped together in another family, as having one common character of structure, called the polysynthetic, which compels us to presume the unity of their origin. And this family is again connected by many and various affinities both with the African on the one hand, and with the Turanian on the other. There remain the Polynesian, the Australian, and the Papuan languages. These, so far as they have been examined, are found to have manifold connections with each other; and the Polynesian have been shown, by William von Humboldt, to be allied to those of the Indian Archipelago, Malacca, and Madagascar, by such essential affinities as demonstrate a radical unity.

As to the origin of language, whether it was derived from the special inspiration or direct gift of the Creator, or whether it has been the natural product of the human mind reacting, through its sensibilities and the physical organization with which it is connected, upon the external influences and objects by which it is surrounded, we need not and we cannot positively decide. That it is neither the growth of a mere materialistic development, nor the product of mere arbitrary convention, must be equally clear to any man who has fitted himself to pass an intelligent judgment in the case. The opinion of William von Humboldt may be inferred from the following passage in a letter to M. Abel Rémusat.

“Je suis pénétré de la conviction qu’il ne faut pas méconnaître cette force vraiment divine que recèlent les facultés humaines, ce génie créateur des nations, surtout dans l’état primitif, où toutes les idées et même les facultés de l’âme empreintent une force plus vive de la nouveauté des impressions, où l’homme peut pressentir des combinaisons auxquelles il ne serait jamais

arrivé par la marche lente et progressive de l'expérience. Ce génie créateur peut franchir les limites qui semblent prescrites au reste des mortels, et s'il est impossible de retracer sa marche, sa présence vivifiante n'est pas moins manifeste. Plutôt que de renoncer, dans l'explication de l'origine des langues, à l'influence de cette cause puissante et première, et de leur assigner à toutes une marche uniforme et mécanique qui les trainerait pas à pas depuis le commencement le plus grossier jusqu'à leur perfectionnement, j'embrasserais l'opinion de ceux qui rapportent l'origine des langues à une révélation immédiate de la Divinité. Ils reconnaissent au moins l'étincelle divine qui luit à travers tous les idiomes, même les plus imparfaits et les moins cultivés."

"We are convinced," says the Chevalier Bunsen, "that the power of the mind which enables us to see the genus in the individual, the whole in the many, and to form a word by connecting a subject with a predicate, is the same which leads men to find God in the universe, and the universe in God. Language and religion are the two poles of our consciousness, mutually presupposing each other. The one is directed to the changing phenomena of the world, in the conviction of their unity, the other to the unchangeable, absolute One, with the subsumption of all that is changeable and relative under him."

On the same subject Charles Meyer expresses himself as follows: —

"One of the grandest results of modern comparative philology has been to show that all languages belonging to one stock, — and we may even say, enlarging this view, all languages of the earth, — are but scattered indications of that primitive state of human intellect, and more particularly of the imitative faculty, under the highest excitement of poetic inspiration, in which the language originated, and with which every language remains connected, as well through the physiological unity of the human race, as through the historical unity of the family to which it more especially belongs. Of the divine art by which man in that happy primitive state of intellectual activity was enabled to understand the world and himself by means of imitative movements of his voice, and, at the same time, of the sacred treasure of ideas thus embodied in sound with which he then became entrusted, a certain portion only has been preserved and developed by each family of the human race, in accordance with its peculiar character and history, its virtues and defects."

Whether the origin of language can thus be accounted for or not, the only choice seems to lie between some such

explanation and a resort to immediate revelation, — a resort from which we really can see no good reason for so sensitive a shrinking, or rather so anti-pathetic an aversion, as is often exhibited. For ourselves, we confess, we incline to the theory which ascribes primitive speech to immediate inspiration.

Descending from such an origin, the great leading families of language represent not so much portions, fragments, or branches, as different forms and stages of development.

“Language is the produce of inward necessity, not of arbitrary or conventional arrangement; consequently, every sound must originally have been significative of something. The unity of sound (the syllable pure or consonantized) must therefore originally have corresponded to a unity of conscious, plastic thought; and every thought must have had a real or substantial object of perception.” . . . “Absolute, unchangeable, and unbending substantiality, then, is the character of the primitive language; but it is equally true that the ideal principle, or the action of the mind which produced language by a spontaneous re-percussion of the perception received, must not be considered as ever resting or ceasing, but on the contrary, as being continually working upon the language. If substantiality is the principle of existence in a language, ideality is as essentially its principle of development or evolution. *Language has in itself, by the very nature of the principle of its origin, a principle of development.* The mind which forms a language, changes it also. It starts from sentence-forming words, and tends to break their absolute, isolating nature by making them subservient to the whole of a developed sentence, and changing them into parts of speech; and this it can only do by gradually using full ancient roots for the expression of all that is formal in language.” [Thus arise pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, &c.] “This step coincides necessarily with the division between syllables and words, and precedes the origin of prefixes and suffixes.”

By the introduction of these, in the way of composition and inflection, the grammar of a language is gradually perfected.

“Every really primitive language (if there are more than one) must therefore have begun, as we find that the Chinese and all monosyllabic languages really did begin. Perhaps we may also find the necessary steps of development from such a beginning to the perfection of formative languages.” . . . “The further we go in the examination of the most ancient formations, the more we perceive that every sound had originally a meaning, and every unity of sounds [every syllable] answered to a unity of object in

the outward world for the world of mind. And in the latest formations, we find that inflections, apparently mere modifications of the sound of a word, are, in most cases reducible to prepositions or post-positions, and these again, and all particles, to full roots, or nouns and verbs." If instead of assuming one, we assume several, historical beginnings of speech, still "we shall find ourselves obliged to assume that the starting point of all has been essentially the same, only that the materials employed have been quite distinct from the beginning. Different families of languages will then, according to this system, represent at the utmost only different stages in lines of *parallel* development. But if we assume one historical beginning, they all, with the exception of one, must have found something of speech and materials, more or less, already stamped and fixed, which they had to work upon when entering into the critical process of their nascent nationality."

All languages do not reach the same stage of development at the same period of time, that is, at the same distance from the parent stock. Nomadic, agricultural, or commercial habits, climate and mode of life, intellectual and physical temperament, revolutions, conquests, colonization, intermixture, and, above all, the introduction of written language and a highly cultivated literature, variously affect and determine the rate and character of the development.

In writing, a language becomes, as it were, crystallized. But the use of letters, and even the appearance of finished literary productions, though they powerfully tend to arrest the progress of change in a language, cannot absolutely fix it where it is. The spoken language will still undergo continual modifications, though at a slower rate; and the written language will follow, reluctantly it may be, yet surely follow, in the gradual transformation.

That the Chinese language should have advanced but a few steps beyond the first stage of development is a remarkable phenomenon, but remarkably in accordance with the other peculiarities of the same people, and with the causes and principles of development above recognized. An agricultural people of the most rigid immobility of habits mental, moral, and social; never driven from their ancient territory by any political convulsion or external power; absorbing and assimilating all their conquerors; possessing the most ancient history, the most primitive civilization, and the earliest litera-

ture of any of the nations or families of mankind ; — the Chinese remain to this day, as in almost every other particular, so in their language, a fac-simile almost of what they were thousands of years ago. In them the primeval development of human civilization and of human language has been stereotyped.

“The only preparation which, after a literature of 4000 years, the Chinese presents for a change from an inorganic to an organic character, is in the use of some of its unchangeable roots as signs of grammatical relations. A new nation arising — a nation which should form itself into existence under such a state of the language, could as easily make that great step as the mummified Chinese is incapable and unwilling to do it. It is the feeling of the absolute independence and isolating substantiality of each word in a sentence which makes him contemplate such a change as a decided decay and barbarism.”

Among the monosyllabic languages, the Burmese and the Thibetian are said to have made a somewhat greater progress than the Chinese towards an organic character.

If we take the Chinese as one extreme, the Sanscrit and Greek will represent the opposite extreme ; and between the two, we shall have the old Egyptian, and perhaps the Celtic, and the Hebrew with its dissyllabic forms still traceable, as many linguists are confident, to monosyllabic roots.

Here we are met with two surprising phenomena. The first is, that many of the most savage and uncultivated dialects, as the African and American families, for example, are among the most complex in organization and elaborate in structure ; showing apparently that literary culture does not develop languages in this direction, but rather fixes and records the stage in which it chanced to find them. The second phenomenon is, that in the case of the more perfectly organized languages which have been possessed of a cultivated and classical literature, when, by their violent breaking up in consequence of social convulsions or other great disturbing causes, they are succeeded by new formations, these formations almost invariably show a tendency to return towards a more primitive stage in the natural order of development. And the greatest cultivation of these languages for literary purposes does not seem to check such a tendency, or to introduce an opposite one. Thus, the decomposition which

has taken place in the Teutonic languages with reference to the ancient Gothic or more ancient Sanscrit, and in the Romance languages with reference to the Latin, is, with reference to the still more primitive mother tongue, only a kind of return to their original state. Prepositions are substituted for the inflections of nouns, and auxiliaries for those of verbs. The grammatical structure of the English language as compared with the Anglo-Saxon is only another illustration of the same law. And it may, moreover, be added that, in the sounds of several letters, the English, as compared with the Anglo-Saxon, the Latin, and the Greek, betrays a strange tendency to revert to the phonology of the remote Sanscrit; as appears, for example, in the softening of the sounds of *c* and *g*.

The general result of the most extended and critical philological researches is, that there is no language, however savage, which is perfectly insulated. Every language belongs to some family; and all the families, as such, are so related to one another by community of words, grammatical analogies, intermediate gradations, and an all-pervading network of tangled affinities, that it is impossible to suppose any portion to have been historically entirely separated from the common stock. It is, moreover, a remarkable fact that the less one knows of languages, the greater their diversities appear; but the more thoroughly they are studied and familiarized, the greater are found and acknowledged to be their similarities and analogies; and the greater the number of languages which one is able intelligently to compare, the more those similarities and analogies branch out, interlock, and intertwine in every direction, until the whole is at length woven into one firm and solid texture. We are, therefore, forced to assume an original unity of human language, of which all existing languages are but branches and offshoots, or organized fragments, or, perhaps still better, different forms and stages of development.

This essential and primeval unity of language points unequivocally to a genealogical unity of man. There is but one way in which, admitting the premises, this conclusion can be avoided. It may be held that this unity of speech is sufficiently accounted for by the psychological unity, together with the nearly uniform phonetic organization, of the different races of men. Thus, every articulate sound having a

natural and proper significance, the coincidences in the applications of these sounds may be regarded as a matter of course, without needing to be explained by any historical, that is, external or matter-of-fact, connection. That every articulate sound or syllable was originally significant, we are quite ready to believe and maintain. And that, in all languages, a certain small portion, corresponding to objects, movements, and ideas which have a perceptible and proper relation to the sense of hearing, is based upon a direct and natural application of imitative sounds, and consequently may be nearly the same in each, is not to be denied. But beyond this restricted sphere, we can hardly be persuaded that the particular application of the significant sounds can, or ever could, be determined by any psychologically *à priori* law, by any ascertainable natural adaptation. Even if language be, as we are not disposed to deny, the natural product of the human faculties under the circumstances in which they have been from time to time developed, still, as the faculty of imagination must have had a principal share in the work, and that, too, while excited and acted upon, not by general or philosophical views, but by the special influences of particular emergencies and occasions, the result must, to a very great extent, be apparently arbitrary, and could hardly admit, — on the supposition of several distinct and independent sources, — of the multitudinous coincidences which the phenomena of language present to us. Besides, if different races of men, entirely distinct in their origin and historically unconnected, were, in the first invention and formation of their languages, led by the similarity of their mental constitution into those coincidences which mark the fundamental materials and structure of human speech, whence, then, should the tendency to divergence ever arise, that constitution remaining essentially the same in the latest as in the earliest times? The very same causes which shaped their origin, according to this theory, are daily determining the development of languages; why then should it be needful to resort to such exceedingly obscure and abstruse speculations on the natural significance of phonetic signs, in order (though after all unsuccessfully) to render that significance generally intelligible to the same human faculties which first perceived and applied it, and must be daily perceiving and applying it? Certainly no dreams of

the wildest of the old school of etymologists ever equalled in boldness and oddity the profound and mysterious speculations of this modern school of linguists; who would fain make us believe, for example, that the letters *k* and *g* and their cognates, “in the first place, name the *guttur*, *gurgel*, *gorge*, *gosier*, *kehle*, *gula*, *collum*, and express what resembles the *throat* physically, the dimensions of *height* or *depth*, the *capacious*, *covering*, *hidden*, or *hiding*, the *angular*, the *break* of a line or connection; and in the second place, they are symbolical of the *internal*, [see “*covering*,”] *essential*, *central*, *causal*; the *key*, the *unknown*, [how the *unknown* rather than the *known*?] the *creative*; *growing*, *connecting*, *action*, the *cutting into any thing*, the *first personal pronouns*, and the *interrogative*,” &c., &c.; — and all this, be it observed, not as a historical fact, but by a natural and inherent fitness, — a sort of special preëstablished harmony. So far as such coincidences exist, and they doubtless do exist to a remarkable degree, we cannot but think that the presumed historical explanation must be far more satisfactory to common sense, as well as to sound logic, than the transcendental.

We take the liberty to quote here the results and conclusions at which the Chevalier Bunsen has arrived, in his work on Egypt.

“This question (namely, of the antiquity and affinities of the Egyptian language) becomes the more interesting and important, when it must be considered as demonstrated, that such an affinity cannot be explained by mere internal analogy; that, on the contrary, it is historical in the strictest sense of the word, namely, *physical* or original. I mean that the affinity alluded to cannot be rationally explained by a real or supposed general analogy of languages, as the expressions of human thought and feeling, nor by the later influence of other nations and tongues. Now the Egyptian name of Egypt is *Chémi*, the land of *Cham*, which in Egyptian means *black*. Can we, then, have really found in Egypt the scientific and historical meaning of *Cham*, as one of the tripartite divisions of post-diluvian humanity? The Egyptian language attests a unity of blood with the great Aramaic tribes of Asia, whose languages have been comprised by scholars under the general expression of Semitic, or the languages of the family of *Shem*. It is equally connected by identity of origin with those still more numerous and illustrious tribes which occupy now the greatest part of Europe, and may perhaps, alone or with other families, have a

right to be called the family of Japhet. I mean that great family to which the Germanic nations belong, as well as the Greeks and Romans, the Indians and Persians, the Slavonic and the Celtic tribes, and which are now generally called, by some, the Indo-Germanic, by others, the Indo-European nations."

The mode of answering the following question may show whether Bunsen's opinion should have any scientific weight.

"Is the Asiatic and European man a more favorably developed and perfected Egyptian and African? or is the Egyptian (and perhaps the African man in general) a scion of the Asiatic stock which gradually degenerated into the African type?"

"Both assumptions claim on the fields of science an equal right. I assume two principles as the inviolable conditions of every scientific inquiry. The one is,—*science excludes no suppositions, however strange they may appear, which are not in themselves absurd*, namely, demonstrably contradictory to its own principles; and the second, equally sacred,—*science admits of no assumptions, however natural or imperative they may be deemed, which are extraneous to its immediate object*. The whole question lies in these two axioms. As to myself, I exclude the hypothesis of a difference in the physical descent of the Egyptians and the two great families of Asia and Europe already mentioned, merely because I believe that facts have been discovered and methodically established which make it impossible to adopt such a theory."

"Either there has been an infinite number of beginnings, out of which different tribes have sprung, and with them different languages, each doing originally the same work, and continuing and advancing it more or less according to its particular task, its natural powers, and its historical destinies; or the beginning of speech was made only once, in the beginning of human time, in the dawn of the mental day, by our favored race (however it was originally formed) in a genial place of the earth, the garden of Asia," &c.

"Now, if the first supposition be true, the different tribes or families of languages, however analogous they may be, (as being the product of the working of the same human mind upon the same outward world by the same organic means,) will nevertheless offer scarcely any affinity to each other in the skill displayed in their formation, and in the mode of it; but their very roots, full or empty ones, and all their words, whether monosyllabic or polysyllabic, must needs be entirely different. There may be some similar expressions in those inarticulate bursts of feeling, not reacted upon by the mind, which the grammarians call inter-

jections. There are besides some graphic imitations of external sounds, called onomatopœia, words the formation of which indicates the relatively greatest passivity of the mind. There may be besides some casual coincidences in real words; but the law of combination applied to the elements of sound gives a mathematical proof, that, with all allowances, the chance is less than one in a million for the same combinations of sounds signifying the same precise object."

"At all events, we flatter ourselves that we have made good our assertion, that the Egyptologic discoveries are most intimately connected with the great question of the primeval language and civilization of mankind, both in Asia and Africa, and that they give a considerable support to the opinion of the high, but not indefinite, antiquity of human history, and to the hypothesis of the original unity of mankind and of a common origin of all languages of the globe."

Thus we are again brought to the grand point to which we were proposing to apply the whole argument upon the analogy and unity of human speech. In concluding this argument, we would simply add a reference to certain authorities, to strengthen it where it might otherwise seem weak or inconclusive.

We do not appeal to American physiologists, because their authority is too near home; and a "prophet is not without honor save in his own country." We do not appeal to the first English physiologists, as Owen and Prichard, because we have observed that their names are sometimes, though most unjustly, treated with a sneer by those who array themselves on the other side;—we do not mean that Professor Agassiz, (who is in himself a host for our opponents,) or any other really scientific man, would so treat them. But let them pass. Cuvier, who was, at once, almost the founder and the finisher of physiology in France, is well known to have stoutly maintained the unity of the human species. Johannes Müller, who also occupies the very highest position among the most scientific physiologists of Germany, gives his conclusion in the following words:—

"The different races of mankind are forms of one sole species, by the union of two of whose members descendants are propagated. They are not different species of a genus, since in that case their hybrid descendants would remain unfruitful. But whether the human races have descended from several primitive

racess of men or from one alone, is a question which cannot be determined from experience."

We will add only the authority of the two Humboldts ; which, all things considered, is the very highest that could be brought to bear upon the subject. Müller has truly said that the genealogical unity of mankind can never be determined from experience ; yet he plainly holds that experience shows nothing against it,—that the results of all physiological researches are in perfect harmony with its assumption. William von Humboldt adds a similar indecisive conclusion in regard to the results of philological investigations.

"It is in vain that we direct our thoughts to the solution of the great problem of the first origin, since man is too intimately associated with his own race and with the relations of time to *conceive of the existence of an individual independently of a preceding generation and age*. A solution of those difficult questions, which cannot be determined by inductive reasoning or by experience, cannot therefore be determined from philological data ; and yet *its elucidation ought not to be sought from other sources*."

That is to say, there can be no demonstrative or complete scientific proof in the case. The evidence can only be of such a sort as to render a certain hypothesis more or less probable. We would direct special attention to the phrases italicized above. The first refers to a truth too often lost sight of by natural philosophers ; that the origin, the absolute beginning, always transcends the sphere of experimental inductions, as well as of our rational conceptions. Of necessity, something has to be assumed somewhere,—call it miracle, creation, what you will, which is above all natural laws,—so far, at least, as such laws are laws of experience,—which cannot be explained by them or even conceived in consistency with their immediate application ; but without which they themselves would be absolutely inconceivable, being destitute of all real substratum or rational support. In the case referred to, moreover, it is at least as easy to conceive of one independent beginning of humanity as of an indefinite number of independent beginnings. The second phrase, we would specially note, contains the declaration that the elucidation of the primordial *origines* of the human race should be sought only in philological data.

That William von Humboldt believed fully in the essential unity of the human race, (the genealogical unity remaining in his mind in a scientifically problematical state,) is evident from the following passage in his great work on the Kawi language : —

“If we would indicate an idea, which throughout the whole course of history, has ever more and more widely extended its empire, — or which more than any other testifies to the much contested, and still more decidedly misunderstood, perfectibility of the whole human race, — it is that of establishing our common humanity — of striving to remove the barriers which prejudice and limited views of every kind have erected amongst men, and to treat all mankind without reference to religion, nation, or color, as one fraternity, one great community, fitted for the attainment of one object, the unrestrained development of the physical powers. This is the ultimate and highest aim of society, identical with the direction implanted by nature in the mind of man towards the indefinite extension of his existence. Thus deeply rooted in the innermost nature of man, and even enjoined upon him by his highest tendencies, — the recognition of the bond of humanity becomes one of the noblest leading principles in the history of mankind. It was Christianity which first promulgated the truth of this exalted charity, although the seed sown yielded but a slow and scanty harvest. Before the religion of Christ manifested its form, its existence was revealed only by a faint foreshadowing presentiment. In recent times, the idea of civilization has acquired additional intensity, and has given rise to a desire of extending more widely the relations of rational intercourse and of intellectual cultivation; even selfishness begins to learn, that, by such a course, its interests will be better served than by violent and forced isolation. *Language, more than any other attribute of mankind, binds together the whole human race.*”

Still more positive and explicit are the opinions expressed by Alexander von Humboldt on these points, — of the unity of mankind, and of language as its principal bond and proof. In closing the first volume of his *Cosmos*, he holds the following language : —

“The investigation of the obscure and much-contested problem of the possibility of one common descent of mankind enters into the sphere embraced by a general physical cosmogony, and will impart a nobler, and, if I may so express myself, more purely human interest to the closing pages of this section of my work.

"The vast domain of language, in whose varied structure we see mysteriously reflected the destinies of nations, is most intimately associated with the affinity of races. The most important questions of the civilization of mankind are connected with the ideas of races, community of language, and adherence to one original direction of the intellectual and moral faculties.

"As long as attention was directed solely to the extremes in varieties of color and form, and to the vividness of the first impression of the senses, the observer was naturally disposed to regard races rather as originally different species than as mere varieties. The permanence of certain types in the midst of most hostile influences, especially of climate, appeared to favor such a view, notwithstanding the shortness of the interval of time from which the historical evidence was derived. In my opinion, however, more powerful reasons can be advanced in support of the theory of the unity of the human race, as for instance, in the many intermediate gradations in the color of the skin, and in the form of the skull, which have been made known to us in recent times by the rapid progress of geographical knowledge, the analogies presented in the varieties in the species of many wild and domesticated animals, and the more correct observations collected regarding the limits of fecundity in hybrids. The greater number of the contrasts, which were formerly supposed to exist, have disappeared before the laborious researches of Tiedemann on the brain of Negroes and of Europeans, and the anatomical investigations of Vrolik and Weber, on the form of the pelvis. On comparing the dark-colored African nations, on whose physical history the admirable work of Prichard has thrown so much light, with the races inhabiting the islands of the South Indian and West Australian Archipelago, and with the Papuas and Alfours, we see that a black skin, woolly hair, and a negro-like cast of countenance are not necessarily connected together.

"The distribution of mankind, therefore, is only a distribution into *varieties*, which are commonly designated by the somewhat indefinite term, *races*.

"Languages, as an intellectual creation of man, and as closely interwoven with the development of mind, are, independently of the *national* form which they exhibit, of the greatest importance in the recognition of similarities or differences in races. This importance is especially owing to the clue which a community of descent affords in threading that mysterious labyrinth in which the connection of physical powers and intellectual forces manifests itself in a thousand different forms.

"Language is a part and parcel of the history of the development of mind. From the remotest nebulae and from the revolving double stars we have descended to the minutest organisms of

animal creation, whether manifested in the depths of ocean, or on the surface of our globe, and to the delicate vegetable germs which clothe the naked declivity of the ice-crowned mountain summit; and here we have been able to arrange these phenomena according to partially known laws; but other laws of a more mysterious nature rule the higher spheres of the organic world, in which is comprised the human species in all its varied conformation, its creative intellectual power, and the languages to which it has given existence. A physical delineation of nature terminates at the point where the sphere of intellect begins, and a new world of mind is opened to our view. It marks the limit, but does not pass it."

Such is the decided testimony borne to the probable specific and genealogical unity of the human race, and to the importance of language as bearing upon the question of that unity, and upon human development and history in general, by the first physiologists of the age, and by men combining the highest and most comprehensive attainments in all the walks of science and learning,—men of the widest observation and of the most free and liberal views. Of all men living, if any man may be exempted from the charge of mere theorizing, of one-sidedness, or narrow-mindedness, surely it is Alexander von Humboldt. When, therefore, any man whose whole knowledge is limited to the sphere of the physical sciences, or perhaps to that of some one of them, is disposed to treat the study of language with contempt, either as considered in itself or as bearing upon the origin and history of mankind, let him remember that there are men opposed to him who are neither mere etymologists nor mere theologians.

Lest any one should suppose the opinions of the author of the *Cosmos* are warped by any influences of religious prejudice or religious scruples, we will cite a passage from the same work, which should set that question at rest; and we cite it solely for this defensive purpose, and not because we consider such an innuendo as it contains, in the slightest degree honorable to the head or heart of the author.

"The applications of botanical and zoölogical evidence to determine the relative age of rocks—this chronometry of the earth's surface, which was already present to the lofty mind of Hooke—indicates one of the most glorious epochs of modern geognosy, which has finally, on the continent at least, been *emancipated from the sway of Semitic doctrines.*"

If the authorities which we have cited be deemed antiquated, and later lights be referred to as having reversed all their decisions and cast them entirely into the shade, we can only answer with a sigh at the constant revolutions and changes by which the physical sciences are characterized ; — while at the same time, strangely enough, they are often recommended, in contrast with metaphysical and literary pursuits, as containing solid and permanent knowledge, — indeed, the only solid and permanent knowledge there is in the world. If these authorities have grown antiquated in six or eight years, what confidence can we put in the authorities which have succeeded them ? What will *they* be worth six or eight years hence ?

The author of the *Cosmos* says, in his preface : —

“ It has frequently been regarded as a subject of discouraging consideration, that whilst purely literary products of intellectual activity are rooted in the depths of feeling, and interwoven with the creative force of imagination, all works treating of empirical knowledge, and of the connection of natural phenomena and physical laws, are subject to the most marked modifications of form in the lapse of short periods of time ; both by the improvement in the instruments used and by the consequent expansion of the field of view opened to rational observation, and that those scientific works which have, to use a common expression, become *antiquated* by the acquisition of new funds of knowledge, are thus continually being consigned to oblivion as unreadable. However discouraging such a prospect must be, no one who is animated by a genuine love of nature, and by a sense of the dignity attached to its study, can view with regret any thing which promises future additions and a greater degree of perfection to general knowledge.”

While we call the attention of others to the facts stated in the former part of this paragraph — facts which must be well known to every person familiar with large modern libraries — we cordially subscribe for ourselves to the sentiment contained in the latter.

In estimating the value of the results of physical as of every other science, it is of the highest moment to distinguish facts from theories, premises from conclusions. Facts never become antiquated ; it is theories and hasty conclusions that are continually passing into oblivion. Facts are irresistible. Against them it is useless, as it is absurd, to reason.

But theories, because they profess to be founded upon facts, are not at once to be assumed as supreme and impregnable, and to demand instant and unconditional submission. Theories without facts, are utterly baseless and worthless. Theories with facts, may have an insufficient foundation, may be ill-adjusted to it, or ill-constructed upon it, and thus be destined to be swept away by the next movement of the elements, or abandoned as untenable by the next step of onward progress.

Neither are all facts of equal value; on the contrary, the immense majority are unworthy of note or record. They can be duly distinguished, rightly and fully estimated, and set in effective array, only by a logical intelligence — a quick-seeing and far-seeing, a truly theoretic, mind. And without the controlling action of such a mind, not only may the induction of facts be insufficient or irrelevant or incongruous, but their very significance cannot be apprehended or interpreted; and without an intelligent, rational interpretation, facts themselves are dumb and dead.

When, therefore, the physiologist, or geologist, or the cultivator of any other department of science, is sure that his induction of facts has been sufficiently extensive to include all apparently conflicting elements; that those facts have been well-sifted and well-digested; that they have been rightly and fully interpreted, and all those of a contradictory aspect satisfactorily harmonized; and that the theory or general conclusion drawn from them is legitimately deduced at every step; and when that theory has borne the test of years or centuries, growing stronger the more it is examined and assailed; — then, and not till then, may he demand that his theory shall be recognized by all reasonable men, and that with it all the departments of human thought and belief, whether in literature, science, or religion, shall be conformed and harmonized.